

Identify and Reward Great Teachers and Principals: Give School Leaders Flexibility to Promote Excellence.

Questions and Answers

Teacher and Principal Evaluations

Why do we need to change the way Indiana schools evaluate teachers and principals?

- In too many schools, evaluations do not reflect real differences in teacher and principal effectiveness. They often fail to identify our best educators and neglect to highlight specific areas of improvement for struggling educators who could benefit from guidance and remediation. In fact, many teachers go years between receiving any meaningful feedback on their performance. As a result, the majority of teachers and principals do not get the support and development they need to improve as professionals and better serve Indiana's school children.

What will ensure the fairness of evaluation?

- Multiple measures will be used to evaluate teachers fairly. These measures may include growth and/or achievement data on assessments (ISTEP+ and end-of-course assessments), classroom observations, professional responsibilities, professional leadership, and other evidence of student learning.

How will teacher evaluations be used?

- Evaluations will be used to provide valuable feedback to teachers and to guide professional development.
- Evaluations should be used to inform decisions regarding hiring, recognizing, rewarding, remediating, and even removing teachers and should also be used in decisions about transfers and reductions in force at the district and school level.

Who will evaluate teachers and principals?

- Administrators or other well-trained evaluators will evaluate teachers. Superintendents will evaluate principals. Thorough training will be required to ensure that evaluations are fair, rigorous and accurate and that feedback is useful.

How will teachers be categorized in the new evaluation system?

- Evaluators will place each teacher into one of four categories: highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, and ineffective. Schools will be required to report annually to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) the number of teachers in each category.

Will principals be similarly evaluated with multiple measures?

- Yes. Student performance data must also significantly inform principal evaluations. Notably, in addition to being accountable for school-wide academic performance, principals will be held accountable for their ability to increase the effectiveness of teachers as well as their ability to dismiss ineffective teachers.

How will special education teachers and teachers without growth data be evaluated?

- Special education teachers and teachers without growth data will also be evaluated on multiple factors, including student performance. The SBE will set guidelines for corporations to identify and/or develop appropriate measures for these teachers. The IDOE will recommend the SBE adopt a menu of options that local school districts will be encouraged to use when determining the best way to measure student performance in non-tested subjects.

What options will corporations have for evaluation tools?

- IDOE will make available a model evaluation tool and implementation plan which will include ways to incorporate student results. Each district will then have the opportunity to adopt the state's model or develop its own tool and plan using state guidelines. IDOE also will provide implementation support, particularly for struggling schools.

How did IDOE develop its model evaluation tool?

- IDOE developed its model evaluation tool with input and guidance from teachers, administrators, education policy groups, teachers' union representatives, and higher education representatives— supported by extensive research on best evaluation practices.

How will teacher evaluation systems be supported?

- IDOE will develop a model evaluation plan with support tools and information on how to implement this plan. It will also provide additional supports including training modules and targeted assistance for schools and districts.

When will this legislation take effect?

- Most of the proposed changes will be effective July 1, 2011; there will be a coordinated series of rollout dates to make the transition to full evaluation as smooth as possible.

Flexibility and Local Control

Why do we need to provide more flexibility and autonomy for local schools?

- To hold schools accountable for student outcomes, leaders need the authority and flexibility to do what is best for the students in their buildings.

Will tenure be eliminated?

- Technically, Indiana does not have tenure for teachers. We have a seniority-based indefinite contract system whereby teachers can receive “permanent status” based solely on the number of years spent in the classroom. This proposal moves us to a performance-based system. In other words, it rewards great teachers by providing them job security.

What are the factors used in reduction in force (RIF) decisions?

- Under the current system, RIFs are based solely on seniority. Under this proposal, RIF decisions could not be based on seniority alone; effectiveness must be a significant factor. Seniority can serve as a tiebreaker if two teachers receive the same rating.

How will teachers be hired and placed?

- Under this proposal, principals have the authority to make staffing decisions to suit the needs of their students. Currently, in some cases, hiring and placement is determined at the corporation level.
- Likewise, teachers will be able to interview at schools where they are interested in teaching—creating a mutually beneficial situation for educators and school leaders to ultimately benefit the children in a school building.

What is the role of collective bargaining in the new system?

- Collective bargaining agreements between school corporations and teachers unions will make salary and wage-related benefit determinations.
- Teachers will be afforded the same due process rights as school administrators.

What factors will be considered in salary schedules and increases?

- This legislation allows locally-developed salary schedules to be based on the following:
 - Experience (years in system)
 - Performance (based on evaluation system)
 - Instructional leadership (e.g. additional responsibilities, leadership within the school)
 - Academic needs (e.g., high-need subject areas)

Will the Indiana Education Employment Relations Board (IEERB) be eliminated?

- No. IEERB will be absorbed by IDOE, as its functions are inherently in IDOE’s area of expertise.